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Mormon "Articles of Faith" Explained

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MORMON "ARTICLES OF FAITH" EXPLAINED.

By D. J. McMILLAN, D. D.

There lies before me a card bearing on one side the names of two men who proclaim themselves elders in the Mormon Church, sent forth as missionaries to convert people to that faith, and to induce them to leave their homes and go to Utah.

On the other side of the card are printed thirteen "Articles of Faith of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints." You have doubtless seen this card and read these Articles of Faith. You may have been convinced that there was nothing very bad in them after all. Indeed, you may have thought you could consistently subscribe to them, believing them to be reasonable if not scriptural. But before you do so, will you listen to one who loves you and desires your soul's salvation; one who has the best opportunity of knowing Mormonism thoroughly, having lived among those peculiar people ten years, and mingled with them in their meetings, heard them preach and teach; seen them in their daily walk and conversation; read their books, studied their history, met and heard their "prophet, seer and revelator," Brigham Young, and his successors, John Taylor and Wilford Woodruff; met and heard all their twelve apostles; many of their priests of both the higher and the lesser priesthood; their presidents, bishops, and teachers; and so knows whereof he speaks. He may be able to give you a little light on the subject. He can have no object whatever in misrepresenting the Mormons. He simply wants to put you on your guard against the most cunningly devised system in the world, and to help you to understand what those

Articles of Faith really mean. In explaining them he will quote the very words of their prophet and apostles.

The 1st Article reads: "1. *We believe in God the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.*" That reads well. All Christians believe that—but not in the same sense in which the Mormons do. Their idea of God is set forth in their catechism, chapter V:

Question 1. "What kind of a being is God?"

Answer. "*He is in the form of a man.*"

Question 6. "Has God a body then?"

Answer. "*Yes, like unto a man's body in figure.*"

Chapter IV, *Question 1.* "Are there more Gods than one?"

Answer. "*Yes, many.*"

Then the Mormons worship a man and call him God: and who is this man?

Prophet Brigham Young, in a sermon in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, April 9, 1852, said: "When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body, and brought *Eve, one of his wives, with him. He helped to make and organize this world.* He is Michael the Archangel, the Ancient of Days, and about whom holy men have written and spoken. *He is our father and our God, and the only God with whom we have to do.*"

The 1st Article of Faith goes on to say, "and in His Son, Jesus Christ."

President Brigham Young said, "I tell you that God was the father of Jesus Christ, *just as I am the father of my son.*"

Apostle H. C. Kimball in the same Tabernacle, July 11, 1852, said: "Jesus was the Son of God, and Hyrum Smith was a Patriarch and a Son of God, and I bear witness unto all men."

Apostle Orson Hyde, president of the twelve apostles, said in a sermon, October 6, 1854: "If at the marriage of Cana of Galilee, Jesus was the bridegroom and took unto Him Mary, Martha, and the other Mary, whom Jesus loved, it shocks not our nerves. If there was not attachment and familiarity between our Saviour and these women, highly improper only in the relation of husband and wife, then we have no sense of propriety.

"We say it was Jesus Christ who was married, whereby He could *see His seed* before He was crucified. I shall say here that before the Saviour died *He looked upon His own natural children as we* look upon ours. When Mary came to the sepulcher she saw two angels and they said unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' She said unto them, 'Because they have taken away my *Lord or husband*.'"

Now, what about the Holy Ghost? On Sunday, September 15, 1857, Apostle H. C. Kimball said: "Well, let me tell you the Holy Ghost is a man; he is one of the sons of our father and our God, and he is that man who stood next to Jesus Christ, just as I stand by Brigham Young. You think our father and our God is not a lively, sociable, and cheerful man; he is one of the most lively men that ever lived."

If this is not blasphemy, what can be? Is it too much to say that Mormonism is a species of idolatry—man worship? Can you believe that the pure and holy God whom your parents worshiped and taught you to worship, will recognize the ordinances administered by such men? Or that the "laying on of their hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost" will be honored by that pure, that holy person of the Godhead?

Article V reads: "*We believe that a man must be called of God, by 'prophecy and by the laying on of hands' by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and to administer in the ordinances thereof.*" Can you believe in men who have no call or ordination except that which came through such a prophet, such apostles, and such priests, as those quoted above? Can you trust them, however plausible they may appear, or smooth or pious may be their talk?

Here, then, is the foundation upon which all the Articles of Faith which follow are founded. We need not take the time to discuss them all. However, we must notice a few of them.

Article VII: "*We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelations, visions, healing, etc.*"

As for the "gift of tongues," it is a noted fact that their apostles and missionaries had to learn the languages of the countries to which they were sent as missionaries just the same

as other people, and that only those of them who in the usual way acquired the knowledge of French, German, Italian, etc., or the dialects of the American Indians, have been able to preach or converse in those "tongues."

As for prophecy, Apostle Heber C. Kimball prophesied in the Tabernacle, September 6, 1857, that Brigham Young would become President of the United States, and he (Kimball) Vice-President. Both have been dead many years, and neither was ever even nominated for office.

Bishop L. D. Young prophesied in the Tabernacle, December 13, 1857, saying, "The whole United States and the whole world could not prevail against the Saints;" and yet General Albert Sydney Johnston with a small army of United States troops marched into Salt Lake City, took possession, displaced Brigham Young from the office of Governor, and placed Governor Cumings in his stead. Brigham Young never afterwards held the office.

On Sunday afternoon, April 2, 1865, Brigham Young prophesied that there would be four more years of war. A week later General Lee surrendered to General Grant, and the war drew immediately to a close, as everybody knows.

Apostle Parley P. Pratt prophesied in 1838: "Within ten years from now the people of this country who are not Mormons will be entirely subdued by the Latter Day Saints or swept from the face of the earth, and *if this prediction fails, then you may know that the Book of Mormon is not true.*"

Brigham Young once said that if one in ten of his prophecies was fulfilled, he thought he was succeeding pretty well as a prophet.

Here is a specimen of the visions of the prophet. This was proclaimed in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, March 27, 1853, by Brigham Young, and recorded in *Journals of Discourses*, Vol. I, p. 83: "I will tell you a dream that I had last night. I dreamed that I was in the midst of a people who were dressed in rags and tatters. They had turbans on their heads, and these were also hanging in tatters. The rags were of many colors, and, when the people moved, they were all in motion. Their

object in this appeared to be to attract attention. Said they to me, 'We are Mormons, Brother Brigham.' 'No, you are not,' I replied. '*But we have been*,' said they, and began to jump and caper about and dance, and their rags of many colors were all in motion to attract the attention of the people. I said, 'You are no Saints; you are a disgrace to them.' Said they, '*We have been Mormons*.' By and by along came some mobocrats, and they greeted me with, 'How do you do, sir? I am happy to see you.' They kept on that way for an hour. I felt ashamed of them, for they were, in my eyes, a disgrace to Mormonism. Then I saw two ruffians whom I knew to be mobbers and murderers, and they crept into a bed where one of my wives and children were. I said, 'You that call yourselves brethren, tell me, is this the fashion among you?' They said, 'Oh, they are good men; they are gentlemen.' With that I took my large bowie-knife that I used to wear as a bosom-pin in Nauvoo, and cut one of their throats from ear to ear, saying, 'Go to hell across lots.' The other one said, 'You dare not serve me so.' I instantly sprang at him, seized him by the hair of the head, and bringing him down, cut his throat, and sent him after his comrade; and then told them both if they would behave themselves they should yet live, but if they did not I would unjoint their necks. At this I awoke. I say rather than that apostates should flourish here I will unsheath my bowie-knife and conquer or die."

The VIIIth Article of Faith reads: "*We believe the Bible to be the Word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God.*"

We have already seen that the Mormon doctrines as taught and explained by the prophet and apostles are at variance with the fundamental truths of the Bible, viz., the nature and attributes of God and the person and work of our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. As for the practices of the Mormons, it will appear further on that religious duty as inculcated by the authority of the Mormon Church is not in accordance with the Bible rules of Christian life and character.

As for the Book of Mormon, it must be said that with all its monstrous pretenses it is better and purer in its teaching than the priests of the Mormon Church.

In the Book of Jacob, chapter iii, verse 5, there is reference to "*the Commandment of the Lord which was given unto our fathers that they should not have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none.*"

Also Jacob ii, 24th verse: "Behold David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord." And in the 27th verse of the same chapter it reads: "Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken unto the word of the Lord; for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife, for I the Lord delight in the chastity of woman."

Now, all the world knows that the Mormons have been teaching polygamy for forty-six years and practicing it for nearly sixty. There is no reverence for even the Book of Mormon, or respect for its teaching as a so-called "Word of God." Nor do they honestly make their doctrines and practices consistent therewith.

Up to 1852 the Mormons indignantly denied that they either taught or practiced polygamy, and pointed to the teaching of the Book of Mormon to prove that they did not. And they said that all charges to the contrary were false and slanderous, invented by their enemies to injure them.

And yet Apostle J. M. Grant bore unintentional testimony to the truth of the charges in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, February 19, 1854, as follows: "When the family organization was revealed from heaven, the patriarchal order of God, and Joseph (who died in 1844) began on the right and on the left, to add to his family, what a quaking there was in Israel! Says one brother to another: 'Joseph says all covenants are done away, and none are binding but the new covenants. Now, suppose Joseph was to come and say he wanted your wife, what would you say to that?' 'I would tell him to go to hell.' This is the spirit of many in the early days of the church. What would a man of God say who felt aright, when Joseph asked

him for his money? He would say, 'Yes, and I wish I had more to help to build up the Kingdom of God.' Or if he came and said, 'I want your wife.' 'Oh, yes,' he would say, '*here she is: there are plenty more.*' Did the prophet Joseph want every man's wife he asked for? He did not. But in that thing was the grand thread of the priesthood developed. The grand object in view was to try the people of God; to see what was in them. If such a man of God should come to me and say, 'I want your gold and silver, or your wives,' I should say, 'Here they are; I wish I had more to give you; take all I have got.'"

The XIth Article reads: "*We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our consciences, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, and what they may.*"

That is good doctrine. The people of the United States believe, practice, and defend it, sacredly. The Mormons, with all their strange worship, have never in any instance been deprived of the right to "*worship how and where and what they may.*" Only when they have interfered with the rights of others, disturbed the domestic affairs and broken up the homes of other people have they been interfered with, and when they have taught and practiced polygamy contrary to the laws of the land, as well as the laws of God, to the subversion of the American idea of home, and the utter destruction of the purity and sacredness of family life—then they have been arrested and punished. And when their elders have led away the wives and daughters of other men to replenish their own harems, they have sometimes been killed by infuriated husbands and fathers, as in the case of their great apostle, Parley P. Pratt, who enticed away the wife of a peaceful citizen of Arkansas and was hunted down and killed by the wronged husband and a company of his friends and neighbors.

But, have the Mormons, who until quite recently had complete control of Utah, "allowed all men the privilege of *worshiping how and where and what they may*"? I might give instances where they have killed men and women for innocently and peacefully worshiping as Christians do, without violating the

above article of faith or any other law or ordinance professedly held by the Mormons. But let their own prophet and apostles bear their testimony.

Prophet Brigham Young, in a discourse in the Tabernacle, February 8, 1857, said: "I have known a great many men who have left this church for whom there is no chance whatever for exaltation, but if their blood had been spilled it would have been better for them. The wickedness and ignorance of the nations forbid this principle being in full force, but the time will come when the will of God will be in full force. This is loving our neighbor as ourselves: if he needs help, help him; if he wants salvation and it is necessary to spill his blood on the earth, in order that he may be saved, spill it. That is the way to love mankind."

All who are not Mormons are called "sinners and hypocrites," and the prophet said, "the sinner in Zion should tremble, and fearfulness should seize the hypocrites," that "the tree which did not bring forth good fruit should be hewn down."

Prophet Brigham Young, on March 2, 1856, said in the Tabernacle: "The time is coming when justice will be laid to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; when we shall take the old broadsword and ask, 'Are you for God?' and if you are not heartily on the Lord's side you will be hewn down."—*Journals of Discourses*, Vol. III, p. 226.

Dr. John King Robinson was killed in Salt Lake City in 1866 because he was an inoffensive Christian and refused to become a Mormon. The Rev. Norman McLeod, a Christian minister, was not allowed to live in Utah and worship according to the dictates of his own conscience.

There was a sect called Gladdenites, who wanted to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, but the prophet Brigham Young said in the Tabernacle: "Now you Gladdenites keep your tongues still, lest sudden destruction come upon you. I say rather than that apostates should flourish here, I will unsheath my bowie-knife and conquer or die. Let us call upon the Lord to assist us in this and every other good work."

Much more might be said, but for the sake of brevity we will add only that the same spirit prevails among the Mormons to-day, but is held in restraint by the strong hand of the law, the military forces, and the increasing number of good people who have gone to live in Utah in spite of Mormon threats and persecution.

The XIIth Article of their Faith says: "*We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining, the law.*"

The fact is the above is the very opposite of what they teach and practice. But let us prove it out of their own mouths. They predict and promise that it is the mission of the Mormons to overthrow all governments upon earth, and rule supreme. In *Key to Theology*, p. 73, we read: "All merely human, religious or *political institutions, all republics, states, kingdoms, empires, must be dissolved, the dross of ignorance* and *falsehood* be separated and the golden principles of unalloyed truth be preserved and blended forever in the one consolidated, universal, eternal government of the *Saints* of the *Most High*."

They claim that their prophet is God's vicegerent, and as such is superior to all constitutions and laws of this or any other nation. He "holds the keys of revelation of the Oracles of God to men upon the earth; the power and right to give laws and commandments to individuals, churches, rulers, nations, and the world; to appoint, ordain and establish institutions and kingdoms; to appoint kings, presidents, governors or judges, and to ordain and anoint them to their several holy callings; also to instruct, warn or reprove them by the word of the Lord" (*Key to Theology*, p. 68). Of course it is impossible for a man who claims such powers to be loyally subordinate to the constituted authorities of our country, or to be willingly subject to our laws, or to conscientiously and faithfully teach his people so to be.

After the Mountain Meadows Massacre, in September, 1857, when Mormons plundered and murdered 130 peaceful emigrants who were passing through Utah to California, the President of the United States removed Brigham Young from being Governor of Utah, and appointed a law-abiding citizen of Georgia

named Cumings, to that office. The Mormons having threatened that Mr. Cumings should never hold the office, the President sent an army under General Albert Sydney Johnston to protect the new Governor and other officers in enforcing the laws. Brigham Young issued a proclamation to the Mormon "saints" on September 15, 1857, in which he said: "We are invaded by a *hostile force*. Therefore, I, Brigham Young, Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Territory of Utah, forbid all armed forces of whatever description from coming into this Territory under any pretense whatever." This does not sound much like "being subject to presidents, rulers and magistrates, obeying, honoring, and sustaining, the law."

But we must close with a brief notice of Article XIII, which says: "We believe in being *honest*, *true*, *chaste*, *benevolent*, *virtuous*, and in *doing good to all men*, etc."

It is a fearful reflection on the honesty and truthfulness of the Mormon people that one Gentile banker, Mr. Warren Hussey, in Salt Lake City in 1872, paid to the government within a few hundred dollars of *twice as much* as the *whole amount* of *revenue tax paid by the entire Mormon people, including Brigham Young and all the Mormon merchants.*

Profanity is very common among the Mormon priests from the prophet down or up to the humblest saint. Brigham Young said in the Tabernacle, October 9, 1852, while describing the saints at work getting wood in the mountain cañons: "Mr. B— says, 'Look yonder, there is plenty of timber and as easy to get as this that I call my own.' Friend H— replies, 'But I'll be damned if I don't get wood where you get it.' Mr. B— says, 'I'll be damned if you *do* go there!' This is the language of men who sit here before me to-day, and so near to me that I could put my hand upon them. You elders of Israel will go into the cañons and curse and swear—damn and curse your oxen, and swear by Him who created you. I am telling the truth!"

"*Chaste!*" "*Virtuous!*" Volumes might be written on these two words, which occur in that thirteenth article of faith, but the following statement which John D. Lee, for forty years a

member of the Mormon Church, and for more than thirty-seven years a priest, made in 1877, in view of his approaching death and with the awful realities of the judgment before him, is quite sufficient: "He (Hyrum Smith, second in the church) explained to me fully the doctrines of polygamy and wherein it was permitted and why it was right. A few months after that I was sealed to my second wife. This was in 1844 (eight years before polygamy was authorized by revelation). I was sealed to her by Brigham Young, then one of the Twelve. In less than one year after I first learned the will of God concerning the marriage of the Saints, as made known by him in a revelation to Joseph Smith, I was the husband of *nine wives.*

"I took my wives in the following order: First, Agatha Ann Woolsey; second, Nancy Berry; third, Louise Free (now one of the wives of Daniel H. Wells); fourth, Sarah C. Williams; fifth, old Mrs. Woolsey (she was the mother of Agatha Ann and Rachel A. I married her for her soul's sake, for her salvation in the eternal state); sixth, Rachel A. Woolsey (I was sealed to her at the same time that I was to her mother); seventh, Andora Woolsey (a sister of Rachel); eighth, Polly Ann Workman; ninth, Martha Berry; tenth, Delithea Morris. In 1847, while at Council Bluffs, Brigham Young sealed me to three women in one night, viz.: eleventh, Nancy Armstrong (she was what we call a widow; she left her first husband in Tennessee in order to be with the Mormon people); twelfth Polly V. Young; thirteenth, Louisa Young (these two were sisters); next I was sealed to my fourteenth wife, Emiline Vaughn. In 1851 I was sealed to my fifteenth wife, Mary Lear Groves. In 1856 I was sealed to my sixteenth wife, Mary Ann Williams. In 1858 Brigham Young gave me my seventeenth wife, Emma Batchelder. I was sealed to her while a member of the Territorial Legislature. Brigham Young said that Isaac Haight, who was also in the Legislature, and I needed some young woman to renew our vitality, so he gave us both a dashing young bride. In 1859 I was sealed to my eighteenth wife, Theresa Morse. I was sealed to her by order of Brigham Young. Amasa Lyman officiated at the ceremony. The last wife I got was Ann

Gordge. Brigham Young gave her to me, and I was sealed to her in Salt Lake City by Heber C. Kimball. This was my nineteenth, but as I was married to old Mrs. Woolsey for her soul's sake, and she was near sixty years old when I married her, I never considered her really as a wife. True, I treated her well and gave her all the rights of marriage, still I never count her as one of my wives. This is the reason that I claim *only eighteen true wives.* After 1861 I never asked Brigham Young for another wife. By my eighteen wives I have been the father of *sixty-four children.* *Ten* of my children are dead and *fifty-four* are still living. This is all I care to say about my own acts or the affairs of my family."

The Articles of Faith which we have been considering were written by Joseph Smith, their first prophet, about sixty years ago. The true meaning of those Articles has been explained and illustrated by precept and example, as above shown, from that day to this. But their missionaries will not tell you the truth about it all; they will allow you to learn it by sad experience; and so it comes to pass that thousands of their best people are turning away from the system in disgust. Mormonism is losing its controlling power in Utah, but not changing its faith nor its teachings. It has received no later revelation respecting its doctrines or practices than those above. On the contrary, their apostle, Joseph F. Smith, while conducting the Mormon Conference at Richfield a few months ago, told the people that there was a law of the United States prohibiting polygamy, but that he had three wives, and that *he obeyed God's law rather than the law of the land.* The Bishop told the Sunday-schools that God had a hundred wives.

In order to win converts to their faith they have managed to create an impression that they have discarded the practice of polygamy, and have decided to be decent, law-abiding citizens. Believing them honest in this profession, Congress has admitted Utah to the Union as a State. But Elder Richard W. Hart, of the Mormon Church, in the fall of 1895, said: "Through divine command President Woodruff *suspended* the ordinance of polygamy, but it has not been repealed. This subject of plural

marriages is very much misunderstood. Not more than fifteen per cent. of our people have more than one wife. As a man prospers the church admonishes him to take additional wives, and he obeys as a religious duty. *In statehood, when we are free from Federal interference, the temple will witness the solemnization of the marriage rites that have been suspended*, and the penitentiary will no longer be filled with men for obeying God's law. Yes, this ceremonial will be resumed; it has never been entirely suspended. I have three wives, all of whom love me, and they have persuaded me to seal another on my return next August, which I shall do."

Mr. J. C. Neilson, late President of the Denmark Mission, becoming disgusted with the dishonesty and hypocrisy of that church, sought and found light and truth in the Word of God. He was roughly dealt with by the Mormon authorities for apostatizing, and in answer to severe charges wrote to President Rudger Clawson, of the Box Elder Stake of Zion, in 1894 as follows: "My guilt is simply this, that I have read and studied the Bible, and have, through the mercy of God, received light and knowledge from him, and a testimony greater than the so-much-spoken-of Mormon 'testimony.' Mormonism is the greatest imposition ever introduced among humanity. You will, perhaps, say that I am blind; but I know that you are, and I only wish that you and all honest Latter Day Saints could see the truth as I now see it. I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and stand firmly on His side. He is my Priesthood, my Saviour, and my King, and I know that He has no connection with a dishonest church. He is the only living High Priest, for 'He liveth forever' (Heb. vii : 14–28). All other high priests are impostors. He is the only Saviour, and all other saviours, whether on Mount Zion or elsewhere or otherwise, are engaged in the most profane vanity and fraud. A church wherein the poor have to feed and support the rich is not the Church of Christ. A church dishonest in its political declarations can scarcely be trusted as being honest in its religious pretensions. A church so intolerant and so hateful to humanity that its prayers are constantly for the destruction of peoples and nations

that are in every respect of humanity and charity equal to the people of Utah, is void of Christianity. I have spent twenty-seven of the best years of my life in the service of this imposition and error. I regret it, and hope that my God and my Saviour will forgive me, for I did it in sincerity, thinking I was right, but I now see my ignorance."

Reader, go to Utah if you want to; you will find many good people there. You will find a prosperous country, rich in natural resources, which are being rapidly developed where Gentile enterprise and intelligence predominate; but *don't*—I pray you, *don't* join the Mormons until you see them in their homes, hear them in their pulpits, and become acquainted with their history and their literature. If you do you will bring disgrace upon your name and add an unfortunate chapter to your family history, which your children will be ashamed of to their latest generation.

"Thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars."—Rev. ii : 2.